

Registered Mail in Tasmania

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Registered mail services were an important part of the commercial development of Tasmania in the century from colony to statehood. Sending bank drafts and currency through the mails was risky business in the early days of Van Diemen's Land. Convicts carried the mail on many routes between post offices, and highwaymen roamed the countryside ready to rob the mails. A system of registered mail developed out of this commercial need to send valuables by post.

Like many British colonies of the 19th century, Tasmania adopted the commercial practices of the Mother Country. From 1792, England used a system of registration to send coin and other valuables by post. Such letters were handed to the postmaster or designated clerk who wrote the words *Money Letter* in red ink on the front of the letter. Money Letters were noted on the waybill or letter bill and wrapped therein for dispatch to the next post office. The charge for this service was doubled postage because it was rated as a letter within an enclosure. Upon delivery to the addressee, the postmaster received a receipt for delivery. The receipt was retained by the postmaster as proof of delivery.

By the 1830s, the term *Registered* was used in Great Britain. From 1841, the fee for registration was a flat fee of 1/-, reduced to 6d in 1848.

The earliest mention on record of registering letters from Tasmania is a set of handwritten instructions issued in 1832 for the handling of money letters in the Hobart GPO [Clemente, *PHJ* No. 79, June 1988]. The earliest postal item is a letter of receipt dated 22 June 1833 from Postmaster E. C. Horniman at Campbell Town to John Leake for posting a letter containing two bills worth £1000 sent to London (Figure 1). This receipt does not imply that Postmaster Horniman actually entered a notation of the letter into a *register* or accounts book, but it did give postal patron John Leake the proof of his mailing valuables to a particular addressee. This postmaster's receipt is a precursor to the official Post Office registration system.

The earliest letters from Tasmania containing negotiable instruments and currency were marked on the outside, *Money Letter* as in early English practice. The postmaster recorded (registered) money letters separately in the post office letter books and on letter bills. The sender could obtain a receipt for the letter, and the post office required the recipient to provide a receipt upon delivery. The earliest date recorded for the endorsement *Money Letter* is a Money Letter from

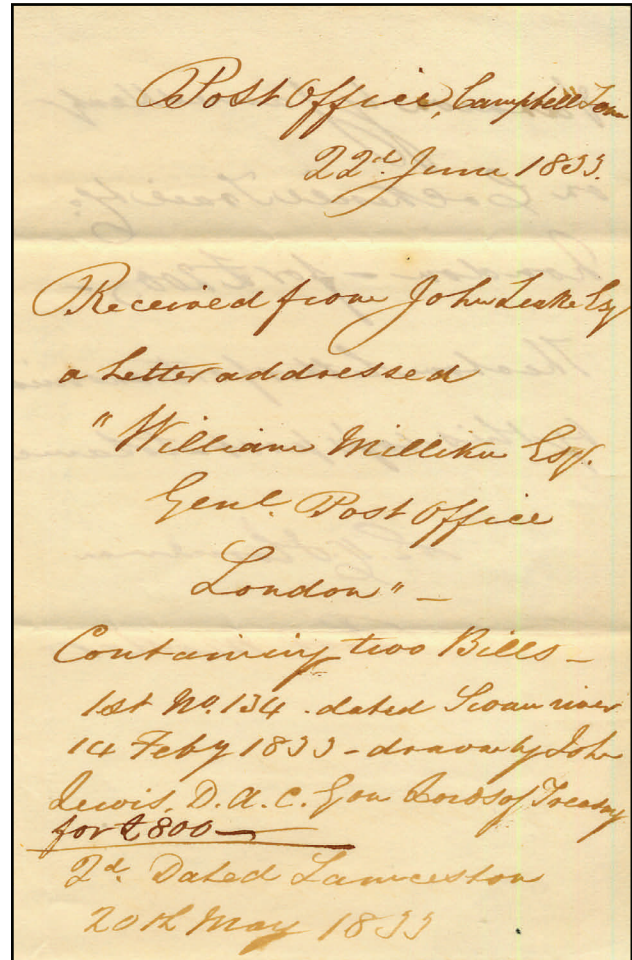


Fig. 1: 1833 letter of receipt for posting two bills

New Norfolk to Hobart dated 3 April 1842 reported by Dr. Clemente in the *Postal History Journal*. Early money letters could be sent paid or unpaid, and there was no extra fee for the service prior to 1851. Registering money letters offered no indemnification against loss, but it did encourage postal workers to treat the item with special care and record each letter's passage throughout its journey.

In the 1846 *Report on the Post Office in Van Diemen's Land*, Postmaster-General F.C. Smith, E. D. James and R. R. Smith recommended that Tasmania "introduce the English System of Registration" with a fee of 6d. The earliest registered letter endorsed *Registered* is dated 9 February 1847 from Circular Head by ship to Launceston. Between 1847 and 1857 both *Money Letter* and *Registered* endorsements coexisted. The latest date for the *Money Letter* endorsement in gen-

eral use is 10 September 1857, but a single very late use of the term (by the sender) is on an official envelope postmarked at Constitution Hill on 8 August 1887.

Based on the Postmaster-General's 1846 report, the government gazetted the first official registration system 18 September 1851, establishing a 6d fee for registered mail (the same rate prevailing in Great Britain) and requiring that it must be prepaid. At first the 6d fee was a personal perquisite to pay the postmaster for the extra work involved handling registered mail. Because it was a perquisite, the 6d registration fee was not marked on the cover. Postal reforms in 1853 eliminated perquisites and raised postmasters' salaries to compensate for the loss. The postal reforms of 1853 included the introduction of adhesive postage stamps, and the registration fees paid from 1 November 1853 were paid by stamps and therefore reflected on the cover.

Variations in money letters include a single instance of the supplementary endorsement *Entered* and two recorded instances of taxed money letters. Because money letters were given special handling by the postmaster, it is unusual to find that the money letter was underpaid. See Figure 2.

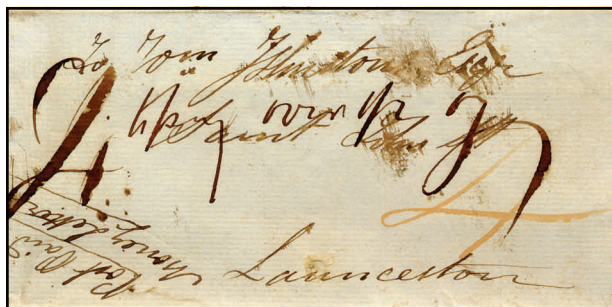


Fig. 2: Taxed Money Letter endorsed “Post Paid/Money Letter” as well as “4d to pay over ½ oz.”

The only *Registered* pre-adhesive period manuscript endorsement from Hobart is recorded on a cover to Portland, New South Wales, dated 15 February 1851 (see Figure 3). There is no record of any cover en-



Fig. 3: 1851 mss “Registered” letter from Hobart to Portland, NSW

dorsed *Registered* in manuscript from Launceston in this period.

Country towns used the manuscript endorsement *Registered* until they received the UPU-mandated “R-in-circle” handstamps in 1892, and some smaller offices persisted after that: the latest date recorded is 7 June 1895 from Moonah to Melbourne. Manuscript *Registered* markings are found also on stamps apparently as a cancellation. *Registered Torquay 30-6-55* is the earliest date, and there are several examples from this office and others, and the latest date is *Registered River Don 1-2-61*, just prior to the Second Allocation of numeral handstamps. The Torquay office opened 2 September 1854, but like many offices opened from late 1854 through early 1861, it was not provided a canceling device until the Second Allocation in March 1861. The markings *Registered Letter* or *Reg Letter* appear on Chalons (off cover) dated from 9 January through 16 July 1867, but the source of these markings is unknown; there are two pairs and five or fewer singles known.

Registered letters are marked with registration numbers to correspond with a number in the register. Generally these numbers began with “1” for the first registered letter processed each year and continued sequentially though 31 December. Some offices may have begun each month with “1.”

Registration Fee Rate Changes 1851-1891

Date	Rate	Notes
1851	6d	Rate not noted on cover
1853	1/-	Must be prepaid in stamps
1862	[Free]	Special concession rate for savings bank packets only (implemented 1882)
1870	6d	
1881	4d	
1891	3d	Adopted the UPU rate

There are two registered covers and a strip of five franked with Tasmania's first issue, the Courier 4d. The strip is noted in manuscript "Registered Torquay 30/6/55."

First Handstamps Introduced

In the mid-1850s, straight-line handstamps of **REGISTERED** approximately 40mm x 5mm replaced the manuscript endorsement *Registered* in Hobart (earliest date of use recorded 13 July 1859) and in Launceston (earliest date of use recorded 12 June 1856). See Figure 4. Askeland (see bibliography) believes that the evidence of slight differences in hand-



Fig. 4: ERD "REGISTERED" 12 June 1856

stamps used on nearly the same dates from the same office indicates that likely two handstamps were issued for each office. The handstamps were struck in black, except that four covers from Hobart are known with the handstamp in red from 1859 through 1866 and another example in 1871, all probably struck in error. After nearly 30 years of use, the handstamps began to wear, and those of Hobart were apparently re-cut in 1888 (see Figure 5). The Launceston handstamps show heavy wear from 1889 to their retirement in 1891; these handstamps were not re-cut (see Figure 6). As Tasmania moved to join the UPU in October 1891, the straight-lined handstamp was phased out for both Hobart and Launceston.

Zeehan was the third largest post office at that time, and it was the system's fastest growing postal volume because of the rapid growth of mining in west-



Fig. 5: Worn (1887) and Re-cut (1888) handstamps



Fig. 6: Worn (1889) Launceston handstamp

ern Tasmania. Zeehan apparently received the Hobart handstamp(s) to provide some relief until the UPU-style handstamps were issued later in 1892. Four covers are recorded dated 12-13 January 1892.

A single instance of another straight-lined handstamp **REGISTERED**. (with full stop) 43mm x 4.5mm struck in red-violet is noted on a large OPSO local registered cover from the Department of Public Works in Hobart dated 13 November 1884. In spite of including

The chart below summarizes the recorded early and late dates of use of the **REGISTERED** handstamp

	Early Date	Worn State	Recut	Late Date
Hobart: black	13 JUL 1859	20 DEC 1882	7 MAR 1888	3 NOV 1890
Hobart: red	1859	---	---	1866
Zeehan	12 JAN 1892	---	---	13 JAN 1892
Launceston	12 JUN 1856	---	---	17 NOV 1891

a postal registration number, we believe that this handstamp is likely of private origin. A different straight-lined handstamp **REGISTERED** 57mm x 6mm on a small OPSO Treasury envelope from Hobart dated 18 August 1891 is a likely precursor to the pre-printed registered OPSO stationery (see below, the discussion of Registered Official Envelopes). Figure 7 illustrates both of these private handstamps.

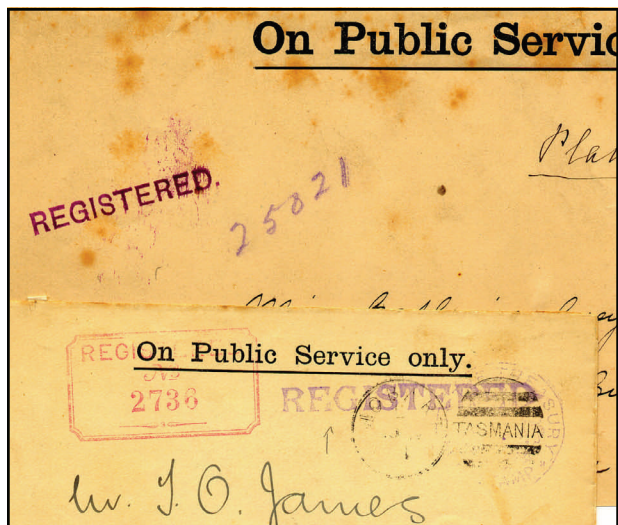


Fig. 7: Privately made "Registered" handstamps

The Special Concession Rate

A special concession rate for posting savings bank packets previously enacted in 1862 became effective 1 November 1882. The rate was the same as the 1d per 4 oz. for printed matter or packets; however, the special concession included free registration. To qualify, the packet had to be clearly marked with the contents and endorsed by the sender on the front. Early packets are marked as normal registered mail with the manuscript *Registered* (from country towns) or appropriate handstamp from Hobart or Launceston. Starting in 1890, Hobart and Launceston began marking some packets *Officially Registered*, and these markings are discussed below under that heading.

"Crossed Lines"

Beginning in 1856 registered mail in England was distinguished by being tied with a green ribbon. The ribbon gave way to tape, and the tape gave way to string by the 1870s. When registered mail envelopes were issued by Great Britain in 1878 with pre-printed "crossed lines" emulating the string pattern, the practice of using string was dropped. Postal workers drew crossed lines with blue crayons on private envelopes to make it plain to all who might process the mail that these were also registered. The use of this marking persists over a century later!

New South Wales was the first postal system in Australia to adopt the British practice of crossed lines starting in the 1870s. The earliest instance in Tasmania

of crossed lines used to mark a registered letter is dated 3 March 1881. The lines were meant to be distinctive; however, there is no particular meaning derived from the colors chosen (blue, red, green, purple, and orange in that order by a rough estimate of frequency). Both postal stationery registered envelopes sold to the public and official Government department registered envelopes were pre-printed with crossed lines with the former in blue and the latter in red.

Crossed lines in themselves did not constitute an official recognition of registered mail. It was still necessary to use the appropriate endorsement and handstamps, including registration number, to ensure proper treatment as registered mail. There was no coercion to use crossed lines, although it was common practice. Tasmanian registered letters are found within the period 1881-1913 without the crossed lines, and these should not be considered scarce or mistakes.

Registered Postal Stationery Introduced

In April 1883, Tasmania followed Great Britain in offering special reinforced envelopes for posting coin and other valuables by registered mail. The envelope design had the words "REGISTERED LETTER" and a large letter "R" on the front and a Tasmanian 4d embossed stamp on the flap to pay the registration fee (see Figure 8 at right and Figure 9 below).

There is an artist's drawing of the embossed die approved 19 June 1882 as well as a proof strike, both from the De La Rue archives. The front and back of the registered envelope are pre-printed with "crossed lines" in the same blue-green color as the rest of the printing on the envelope.



Fig. 8: The Embossed indicia for Registered Envelopes



Fig. 9: 1883 Registered Envelope Size F Type 2

The proper postage had to be affixed according to destination and weight. There were two sizes (F: 132mm x 82mm, and G: 152mm x 98mm). Size F was printed on four plates A through D, and size G used

two plates A and B. Two types of size F are known, based on the spacing of the large “R” from the rest of the text: Type 1 spacing is 3mm, and Type 2 spacing is 1.5mm.

In 1884, Tasmania released a redesigned envelope in both F and G sizes and printed in blue with the large “R” printed inside an oval to conform with the Universal Postal Union requirements, even though Tasmania was not yet a signatory. The envelopes were mass produced in England by McCorquodale & Co. Limited for all of the British Colonies, so a common design was adopted because some parts of the Empire were already members of the UPU.

Tasmania accepted the lower 3d registration rate when it joined the UPU in October 1891. A new registered envelope was produced in 1892 with a non-denominated embossed stamp “TASMANIA/ REGISTRATION” printed on the flap (Figure 10).



Fig. 10: 1892 Indicia

An artist's drawing exists approved 27 August 1891 as well as a proof strike, both from De La Rue archives. The printer De La Rue & Co. used various shades of ink from gray to blue to ultramarine independently for the envelope and the embossed stamp resulting in several different combinations, none of which is scarcer than the others.

New sizes and slight redesign of the knife added to the registered envelopes available during the Federation Period. Proof copies exist of the 127mm x 78mm and 100mm x 64mm sizes (1903 issues). See the chart below.

The pre-printed registered envelopes conformed to UPU specifications and carried all the information to meet registration requirements except the assigned registration number. A great many of the envelopes were additionally struck with various registration handstamps even though that was generally unnecessary unless the handstamp incorporated the registration number. These extra markings or the lack thereof should not be considered scarce or mistakes.

Hobart Boxed Registration Handstamps

A new registration handstamp incorporating the registration number and REGISTERED within a double-lined box 43mm x 24mm replaced the straight-line

REGISTERED handstamps. Hobart used three types (or two types and one re-cut) of the Registration Box handstamp from 1891 to 1904. Type 1 (**REGISTERED/ No./ number**) was always struck in red. The period of use recorded is 11 February 1891 through 14 December 1893. Type 1 earliest date of use is illustrated in Figure 11. Because of its short period in use, this handstamp is scarcer than Type 2.



Fig. 11: Hobart Boxed Registration Type 1

Hobart Registration Box Type 2 (**REGISTERED/ number/ HOBART**) has been recorded used from 24 February 1894 through 2 May 1904, and is known struck in blue (the usual color ink) and abnormally in black, red, violet, and red-violet (all quite rare). The Type 2 handstamp is found occasionally with manuscript corrections to the registration number, usually in purple pencil. An example of Type 2 on a savings bank concession envelope is illustrated in Figure 12.

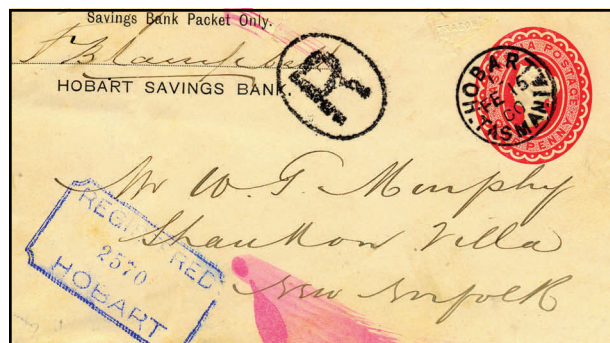


Fig. 12: Hobart Boxed Registration Type 2

Hobart Registration Box Type 3 (Figure 13, next page) is either a new handstamp or a substantially re-cut Type 2. The letters are fine and crisp while the Type 2 handstamp had grown blurred with use. Type 3 is the

New Registered Envelopes Introduced

1903	100mm x 64mm	127mm x 78mm	230mm x 100mm	New Sizes
1907		130mm x 78mm	230mm x 100mm	New Sizes & Knife
1912			230mm x 100mm	“REGISTERED” boxed



Fig. 13: Hobart Boxed Registration Type 3

rarest of the Hobart handstamps because it is recorded in use only during 9-25 May 1904. Type 3 is recorded only struck in blue.

The Hobart Registration Box handstamp was used primarily as an originating handstamp, but it is also known used occasionally as a transit handstamp.

The Hobart Registration Box-type handstamps did not conform to UPU specifications which required a large "R" to appear on the front of the envelope. This meant that from October 1891 onward, Hobart postal workers had to use two handstamps: the Hobart Registration Box to apply the registration number and the large "R-in-oval" handstamp to meet UPU standards. After 1904, Hobart abandoned the Registration Box handstamp in favor of a simple numbering device to apply the registration number.

The UPU-Mandated Handstamps

Tasmania adopted the large black "R-in-oval" handstamp for Hobart and Launceston to meet UPU standards for indicating registered mail. The Hobart handstamp measures 26mm x 20mm (early date 29 April 1892), and the Launceston handstamp is slightly smaller at 25mm x 20mm (early date 19 September 1892, see Figure 14).



Fig. 14: "R-in-oval" Registered Mail handstamp used in Hobart and Launceston

Country towns were issued a large black "R-in-circle" 26mm diameter handstamp for the same pur-

pose (early date 19 May 1892, see Figure 15). These handstamps were replaced by paper registration labels in 1911-1912. All of these handstamps can be found canceling stamps.

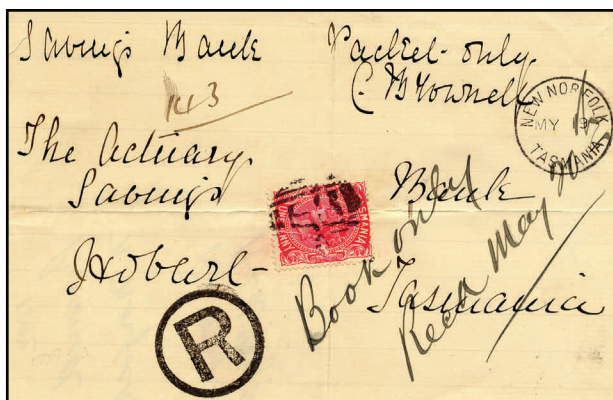


Fig. 15: "R-in-circle" Registered Mail handstamp used in country town post offices

In Hobart, the R-in-oval handstamp was used in conjunction with the registration number provided by the Hobart Registration Box handstamp until 1905. At that date, Hobart postal workers used a simple numbering handstamp with the R-in-oval. There were apparently several numbering devices at the Hobart GPO, because various sizes, styles and colors of numbers are met 1905-1911.

In Launceston, manuscript registration numbers were used with the R-in-oval handstamp until Launceston adopted the Registration Box type handstamp for numbering in 1899. In 1908, Launceston gave up the Registration Box type handstamp and used a simple numbering device as used in Hobart. Also as found in Hobart, various sizes, styles and colors of numbers are found 1908-1911.

In country town post offices, manuscript registration numbers are found with the R-in-circle handstamp from the earliest date in 1892 until replaced by paper registration labels in 1912. Some towns began using simple numbering devices in 1905, and again these vary in size, style and color. The R-in-circle handstamp is known struck multiple times on cover, used to cancel stamps, and used on a postcard in 1904 as a "relief" canceling device or an obliterator to show that the postcard was received from another post office without a datestamp. See examples in Figure 16 (next page). The R-in-circle is known struck in blue 15 January 1906 at Burnie, violet 18 September 1900 at Strahan No. 2 and 7 May 1901 at Kelly's Basin, and in greenish black 18 February 1911 at Back Creek.

Irregular Manuscript Cancellations

The R-in-circle handstamp is found with the "R" enhanced in manuscript within the handstamped circle on Pictorials off cover and one instance reported on a cover from Boobyalla. The R-in-circle all in manu-



Fig. 16: “R-in-circle” used as a cancellation

script is reported on a cover from Scamander. A single “home-made” OHMS registered envelope from the Crown Solicitor in Hobart dated 2 July 1913 was created by a manuscript R-in-circle and crossed lines, both in red ink.

A Hobart cover to New Zealand dated 8 December 1905 is marked in manuscript “Regtd” in purple pencil and handstamped number 1179 with the last two digits enhanced with the same pencil. A registered picture postcard from Launceston to Bosnia dated 8 September 1908 is marked in manuscript “R 316” in blue pencil (Figure 17).



Fig. 17: “R 316” on PPC to Bosnia

Launceston Boxed Registration Handstamp

Launceston adopted a Registration Box handstamp in 1899 patterned after Hobart’s Type 2. The handstamp (REGISTERED/ number/ LAUNCESTON) is recorded from 6 June 1899 to 15 October 1908. The variety of inks is greater than used in Hobart. Nominally struck in blue, it is also found in blue with black numbers; violet with violet or black numbers; red with red, black or brownish numbers; and in greenish gray.

The handstamp is recorded with numbers altered in manuscript and with the handstamp deleted and re-struck (Figure 18). The handstamp is recorded as a receiving mark and transit mark as well as for originating registration.

One registered cover to New Zealand dated 2



Fig. 18: Launceston Boxed Registration (twice)

March 1903 has been struck with both the Launceston (originating) and Hobart (transit) Registration Box handstamps on the face of the cover.

Registered Circular Datestamps

The Hobart GPO put into use a REGISTERED/ HOBART circular date stamp (c.d.s.) with the date in two lines, letter codes and circle stops (Codes recorded are A, H, L, S, inverted S, and No Code). The REGISTERED c.d.s. was used primarily as a backstamp. The earliest recorded date of use is 14 November 1896, and there are two instances of the REGISTERED c.d.s. struck in red: Code H on 11 January 1906 and Code S on 29 December 1904. Figure 19 illustrates the 1906 c.d.s. struck in red. The latest date of use for the REGISTERED c.d.s. is 1914. All of the letter codes (and No Code) REGISTERED c.d.s. are also found used as normal datestamps to cancel stamps (early date found on Pictorials is 20 July 1900), except for Code A.



Fig. 19: Hobart REGISTERED c.d.s. in red

Another REGISTERED/ HOBART c.d.s. with the date in one line was introduced in 1910.

Tasmanian post offices used backstamps to indicate the date (and sometimes the time) that letters were processed in the receiving or transit post office. Most of the Hobart circular date stamp types can be found as backstamps on registered letters received in Hobart. The Hobart Parcels "P." circular date stamp is found occasionally used as a receiving or transit backstamp in place of either a normal c.d.s. or the REGISTERED c.d.s. The period of use recorded for Hobart is 1906-1907, and this use is scarce.

Launceston introduced a REGISTERED BRANCH/ LAUNCESTON circular date stamp with date in one line in 1914 (early date 22 July 1914). This was in use for many years. Because it was introduced after the Pictorials were no longer printed, it is rare on Pictorials but common on Commonwealth issues. One strike of 31 October 1914 is recorded on a 2d Pictorial perfin "T" and another very late strike on a normal 2d in 1932.

Officially Registered Mail

Postal regulations required the postmaster to register certain items. Savings Bank packets were officially registered under the concession rate discussed above. Some items that were payments of rates or addressed to a minister of the Crown were officially registered at no additional fee under the specific laws that governed them; for example, payments of Road Rates. Other items were officially registered under postal regulations if the postmaster had reason to believe that the letter contained coin or other valuables. Officially registered items of this last category were treated as insufficiently stamped or "More to Pay" and taxed at 3d or 6d (3d postage + 3d fine). The postage due appears to be inconsistently calculated.

Items officially registered are marked (usually) with registration number and (usually) the normal registration markings such as *Registered* in manuscript or with a registration handstamp, plus they are (usually) marked in one or more special ways as follows:

1. *OR* in manuscript for "Officially Registered"
2. *Officially Registered* in manuscript (early date recorded in transit at Launceston 30 May 1865). This is also the only recorded manuscript marking before 1886. Figure 20.
3. *Officially* in manuscript and **REGISTERED** handstamp (one example recorded in transit at Launceston 19 March 1886, see Figure 21).
4. *Officially Registered* in manuscript with the word *Registered* overstruck with the **REGISTERED** handstamp (one example recorded in transit at Launceston 5 May 1890)
5. Handstamp (Hobart) "OFFICIALLY/ REGISTERED/

TERED/TO PAY" in pale blue (less than ten recorded, with the earliest date 28 February 1896 and the latest date 20 August 1903). See example in Figure 22.

6. Handstamp (Launceston) "OFFICIALLY/ REGISTERED/To Pay" in red (one example only recorded 21 June 1898)

Officially registered markings other than the simple "*OR*" are all scarce to rare.



Fig. 20: Launceston mss "Officially Registered"



Fig. 21: Launceston "Officially REGISTERED"



Fig. 21: Hobart "OFFICIALLY/ REGISTERED/" TO PAY

Miscellaneous Registered Mail Markings

Returned registered mail was sent back to the originator from the Dead Letter Office in Hobart enclosed in an official "Returned Letter" OPSO envelope. Because the original letter was registered, the OPSO

envelope carrying it was also registered. There are two known matched pairs of the registered Returned Letter OPSO envelope and its contents, the original registered letter. These matched pairs should be considered rare. One pair was returned from South Africa 1 March 1901 (Figure 23) and the other from Queensland 25 July 1900.



Fig. 23: Returned Registered Mail with paired OPSO "Returned Letter" envelope, also registered

Taxed registered mail is unusual because the registered letter received special handling at the originating post office, and underpaid mail should be detected by the postal employee at that point. Nevertheless, occasional letters slipped through which were overweight and thus taxed. Two examples of short-paid pre-adhesive money letters are known.

Two short-paid registered covers from Andover dated 19 February 1901 were paid by a single 4d Pictorial cancelled by the REGISTERED/ HOBART c.d.s. Code Letter H dated 22 February 1901. Another short-paid letter from Abbotsham dated 21 May 1901 was noted by the Hobart GPO 1½ to indicate a triple-weight (1½ oz.) registered letter sent as a single registered letter and with the GPO accountancy mark *T1 Bal* 22/5/01.

Three other markings are recorded for failing to collect registration fees on registered letters:

P.M. Charged is noted in manuscript on a 24 April 1901 registered letter from Derby to Hobart bearing only a 2d Pictorial and large R-in-circle handstamp with registration number 182. Postmasters who failed

to collect the appropriate fee and evidence that payment by affixing 3d in postage stamps were liable to pay for their mistake from their own account.

Obtain Envelope / 3d Defct is noted in manuscript on a 13 November 1900 registered letter from Sorell to Hobart bearing only a pair of 1d Pictorials. The Hobart Chief Clerk wanted the envelope back apparently to show the Sorell postmaster his mistake (and likely to collect the 3d).

Mem 12/2/01 and *T1 Bal 12/2/01* is noted in manuscript on a 11 February 1901 registered letter from Mangana to Hobart bearing only a 2d Pictorial with R-in-circle and registration number 4. *Mem* means that the postmaster in Mangana (post office number 343) was written to for the 3d deficit. The envelope is further annotated *Additional postage paid (343) / E.M.H. 15/2/01* by Chief Clerk Edgar Morrah Hannaford at the Hobart GPO showing that the money was collected.

Occasionally registered letters from country towns are found without registration number or missing the R-in-circle handstamp. These mistakes in postal markings are uncommon, but apparently they did not incur the wrath of the GPO like short-paid postage and fees.

Fig. 24: A.R. Form Type 1

Avis de Réception: A.R. Service

Avis de Recéption (A.R.) is a request for a returned delivery receipt from the recipient of registered letter. The form accompanied the registered letter. When Tasmania joined the UPU in October 1891, the

U.P.U. required that the A.R. service be prepaid at the International Letter rate and that the registered letter carry the letters "A.R." written or stamped on the front.

Two A.R. forms are recorded for Tasmania. Neither form carries any indication that it is exclusively a Tasmanian Post Office form (unlike some other Australian States):

Type 1 Used 1909-1911: 168mm x 213mm on gray paper with code number "R. No. 6." on the top right corner and printer's code "B10969" on the lower left corner. See Figure 24 on the previous page.

Type 2 Used 1912: 160mm x 199mm with perforated left edge on buff paper and no printed codes at either top right or lower left corners.

Avis de Recéption forms used in Tasmania are uncommon. Letters received in Tasmanian post offices marked "A.R." are rare with only two recorded: 6 December 1902 from Cuba to Forth via London (Figure 25) and 28 July 1904 from India to Hobart.



Fig. 25: A.R. Registered letter from Cuba

There is one registered letter reported from Hobart, Tasmania dated 20 August 1914 bearing a pale blue handstamp of a double-lined box 28mm square enclosing "HOBART/ TASMANIA/ A.R./ No." with the "A.R." dominating most of the box. It is the only A.R. handstamp or marking recorded originating from Tasmania prior to 1915.

Registered Official Envelopes

Two types of registered official envelopes are of interest. One type traveled with the mail but not in the mail. These were official Post Office envelopes and wrappers used to segregate registered letters when sending the mail between offices. Actually these envelopes are Post Office forms; nevertheless, they are an interesting and important part of the registered mail process. A few examples of each of the following Post Office forms have been recorded:

1. Post and Telegraph Department/ Tasmania envelope 248mm x 123mm on buff printed in red with at top centered "**REGISTERED MAIL/ FOR**" and at the bottom right "Contains {Registered/ Articles}" and diagonally at left "This

Envelope to be carefully/ searched by receiving Postmaster." The envelope is addressed to a post office and carries the receiving post office circular date stamp.

2. GENERAL POST OFFICE/ HOBART wrappers 157mm x 126mm and 152mm x 90mm on orange-brown paper printed in red with at top centered "**REGISTERED MAIL/ FOR**" and at the bottom right "Contents: _____ Stamped./ _____ Franked./ _____ Ship." The wrappers are addressed to a post office and carry both the originating and receiving post offices' circular date stamps.

The second type of registered official envelopes is the OPSO/OHMS Government stationery envelope for departments other than the Post Office. These were printed with a large "R" either in an oval or in circles of various sizes with printed crossed lines, both in red. Other features of the envelope, such as the crest and/or Department name, were normally printed in black; however, a few were printed completely in red. The purpose of the envelopes was to streamline handling for departments that regularly posted registered letters. The earliest known envelope is dated 14 December 1893 (Figure 26). The envelopes carried no postal value, and they were franked with frank stamps until 1 November 1902 and passed free of postage and fees. After that date, these envelopes carried postage stamps to pay the postage and registration fees. These envelopes are not postal stationery in the strictest terms; nevertheless, they form an interesting study in any collection of registered mail.

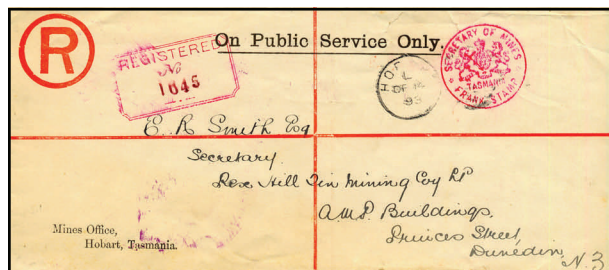


Fig. 26: Official envelope pre-printed for use in Registered Mail

O. G. Ingles in Eugene Tinsley's book, *Tasmania Stamps and Postal History*, was the first to attempt a comprehensive listing of these official envelopes for registered mail. That listing was brought up to date by McNamee in an article in *Philately from Australia* September 2003. A further revised and expanded listing appears here. Envelopes in the following table are listed by department in approximate chronological order. Unless otherwise noted, all have the Tasmanian crest printed in black with the lion and the unicorn in profile facing inward to the middle.

A master chart of all known types follows on the next two pages.

Preprinted Department Stationery for Registered Mail

Department	Env. Type	Size (L x W)	"R" Type	Early Date	Notes
None (Generic)	OPSO	226mm x 96mm	27mm circle	4 AUG 1898	No crest
None (generic)	OHMS serif	280mm x 127mm	27mm circle	9 DEC 1910	No crest. Form A9782
Crown Lands Office	OHMS serif	226mm x 96mm	27mm circle	26 MAR 1896	No crest
Land Titles Dept.[red]	OPSO serif	280mm x 127mm	27mm circle	26 JAN 1903	No crest
Public Works Dept.	OHMS serif	136mm x 80mm	27mm circle	4 JUN 1896	No crest
Public Works Dept	OPSO	138mm x 80mm	21x27mm oval	11 JUL 1904	
Mines Office	OHMS serif	226mm x 96mm	27mm circle	14 DEC 1893	No crest
Mines Department	OPSO	222mm x 95mm	27mm circle	12 SEP 1899	
Mines Department	OPSO	222mm x 95mm	27mm circle	21 MAR 1906	Form B5749
Mines Department	OHMS	222mm x 95mm	27mm circle	16 OCT 1906	Lion facing front
Treasury [red]	OPSO [red]	138mm x 80mm	27mm circle	6 JUN 1896	
Treasury [red]	OPSO	138mm x 80mm	27mm circle	24 FEB 1898	
Treasury [red]	OPSO [red]	138mm x 80mm	21x27mm oval	18 Jul 1899	Crest [red]
Treasury	OPSO	138mm x 80mm	20x26mm oval	3 JUL 1900	Penalty envelope, crest has animals looking outward
Treasury	OPSO	147mm x 90mm	20x26mm oval	14 MAR 1900	ditto
Treasury	OPSO	138mm x 80mm	21x27mm oval	2 APR 1902	
Treasury	OPSO	138mm x 80mm	21x27mm oval	3 OCT 1904	
Treasury	OHMS	138mm x 80mm	20x27mm oval	5 JAN 1906	
Treasury	OHMS	138mm x 80mm	23mm circle	2 JUL 1907	
Treasury	OHMS	138mm x 80mm	27mm circle	3 JAN 1908	Lion facing front
Treasury	OHMS	138mm x 80mm	14mm circle	1 JUL 1908	ditto
Treasury	OHMS	147mm x 90mm	14mm circle	9 OCT 1911	ditto
Treasury [red]	OHMS	138mm x 80mm	27mm circle	3 JUL 1909	ditto
Treasury [bold]	OHMS serif	138mm x 80mm	14mm circle	5 JUN 1909	
Under Secretary's Office [Treasury]	OPSO	138mm x 80mm	27mm circle	2 JUL 1900	
General Hospital, Launceston	OPSO	138mm x 80mm	27mm circle	5 APR 1902	
To: The Honorable Minister of Education	OPSO	180mm x 120mm	25mm circle	2 JUN 1902	Printed all in red. No crest
To: The Honorable Minister of Education	OPSO [bold]	175mm x 115mm	23mm circle	2 JUN 1902	Printed all in red. No crest
Education Department (Department name omitted)	OPSO	138mm x 80mm	27mm circle	1 MAY 1899	crest has animals looking outward. Preprinted address: "State School," in red
Education Department	OPSO	138mm x 80mm	27mm circle	1 OCT 1893	Preprinted address: "State School," in red
Education Department [red]	OPSO [red]	138mm x 80mm	20x27mm oval	1 SEP 1899	Crest [red] Preprinted address: "State School," in red

Preprinted Department Stationery for Registered Mail (continued)

Department	Env. Type	Size (L x W)	"R" Type	Early Date	Notes
Education Department	OPSO	180mm x 120mm (estimate from fragment)	Not Known	1897	Preprinted address: To ... "State School" in red
To The Actuary, State Savings Bank	OHMS serif	280mm x 127mm	23mm circle	9 DEC 1910	Printed all in red. No crest
To The Actuary, State Savings Bank	OHMS serif	280mm x 127mm	23mm circle	9 DEC 1910	Printed all in red. No crest.
.....Postmaster TO THE MANAGER State Savings Bank	OHMS serif	280mm x 127mm	23mm circle	9 DEC 1910	Printed all in red. No crest. "Form 118"
General Post Office, Tasmania	OPSO serif	136mm x 80mm	27mm circle	1 JUL 1893	No crest. "The Postmaster,"
General Post Office, Tasmania "STAMPS REGISTERED"	OPSO serif	224mm x 130mm	25mm circle	15 NOV 1893	"The Postmaster at"
Post and Telegraph Department	OHMS	332mm x 230mm	20x26mm oval	No used examples	Printed all in red. No crest
Post and Telegraph Department, Tasmania	OHMS serif	129mm x 114mm	23x22mm oval	28 FEB 1914	Printed all in red. No crest
Post and Telegraph Department, Tasmania	OHMS	334mm x 205mm	20x26mm oval	21 NOV 1917	Printed all in red. No crest
Stamp Branch, Post and Telegraph Department	OPSO serif	290mm x 165mm	20x26mm oval	17 JAN 1902	Printed all in red. No crest
Telegraph Department	OPSO serif	136mm x 80mm	27mm circle	1 DEC 1893	No crest

Other examples of Preprinted Department Stationery for Registered Mail exist into the Commonwealth period.

Another example of a different design is for the Money Order Office, a registered OPSO envelope without crossed lines printed entirely in black with "REGISTERED" printed at the left on a diagonal. Earliest date recorded for this registered official envelope is 12 December 1898.

Registered Mail Labels

Tasmania was part of the Commonwealth's experimentation with the acceptance and use of paper registration labels. Such labels were already in use in many other countries, including Great Britain and the USA. The Tasmanian Post Office introduced the paper registration labels in Hobart and Launceston as an experiment from 1 October 1908 for (nominally) six months for use only on registered mail to foreign destinations. Later use of these experimental labels has been recorded. A small registered envelope (100mm x 64mm issue of 1903) dated 29 January 1909 carries a Hobart experimental registration label #1193 in addition to the R in oval, etc. printed on the registered postal stationery. The 9 October 1908 earliest use is illustrated in Figure 27, at right.



Fig. 27: Launceston 9 OCT 1908, ERD for the Experimental Registration Label

1908-09 Labels	Earliest	Latest
Hobart	29 January 1909	4 May 1911
Launceston	9 October 1908	8 May 1911

The 1908-1909 experiment was deemed a success throughout Australia, and a new design of registration labels were issued to the Hobart G.P.O. on 1 June 1911 and to Launceston on 1 November 1911. Registration labels had been issued to all country towns by mid-

1912. Larger towns had printed post office names on the labels, and smaller towns used generic labels with their post office name written or handstamped thereon. From 1 July 1911, registration labels were to be used on registered letters for both foreign and domestic destinations by the offices which had the labels. The earliest use of the regular label is illustrated in Figure 28. These were superseded in 1914 by a new Commonwealth style.

1911-13 Labels	Earliest	Latest
Hobart	1 July 1911	
Launceston		11 October 1915
Campbell Town	3 July 1911	
Moorina	21 January 1912	
Mt. Farrell	11 September 1912	
Ouse		13 December 1913
Ulverstone	19 July 1911	
Generic (Glen Huon)	11 October 1912	



Fig. 28: Hobart 1 JUL 1911, ERD for the First Regularly-issued Registration Label

Use of Tasmanian stamps and postal stationery continued until decimal issues replaced and demonetized all pence issues in 1966. Therefore, post-1913 versions of registration labels are known used in conjunction with Tasmanian stamps and postal stationery. A significant portion of this mail is philatelist-inspired.

NOTE: Randall Askeland contributed the information on the Post Office portion of Preprinted Departmental Stationery for Registered Mail on the previous page.

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About the Author:

David McNamee has collected Tasmania for more than 35 years. He has written three books on Tasmanian philately, and his articles have appeared in more than a half-dozen journals. Currently he serves as a Director of the Society of Australasian Specialists/Oceania and edits their quarterly journal, *The Informer*. He is a member of the Tasmanian Philatelic Society and the Launceston Philatelic Society, and he has been elected a Fellow in the Royal Philatelic Society London and the British Society of Australian Philatelists. He currently resides in the USA, and he can be reached at dmcnamee@aol.com.



“Registered Mail in Tasmania” first appeared in *The Congress Book* (72nd American Philatelic Congress, 2006). The version presented here is a revision of that article, bringing the information up to date as of January 2009. The majority of the work on early and late dates and postal markings is based on an original compilation by Randall Askeland of Launceston, extended and enhanced by the author’s own work. Any errors or omissions are entirely mine.

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